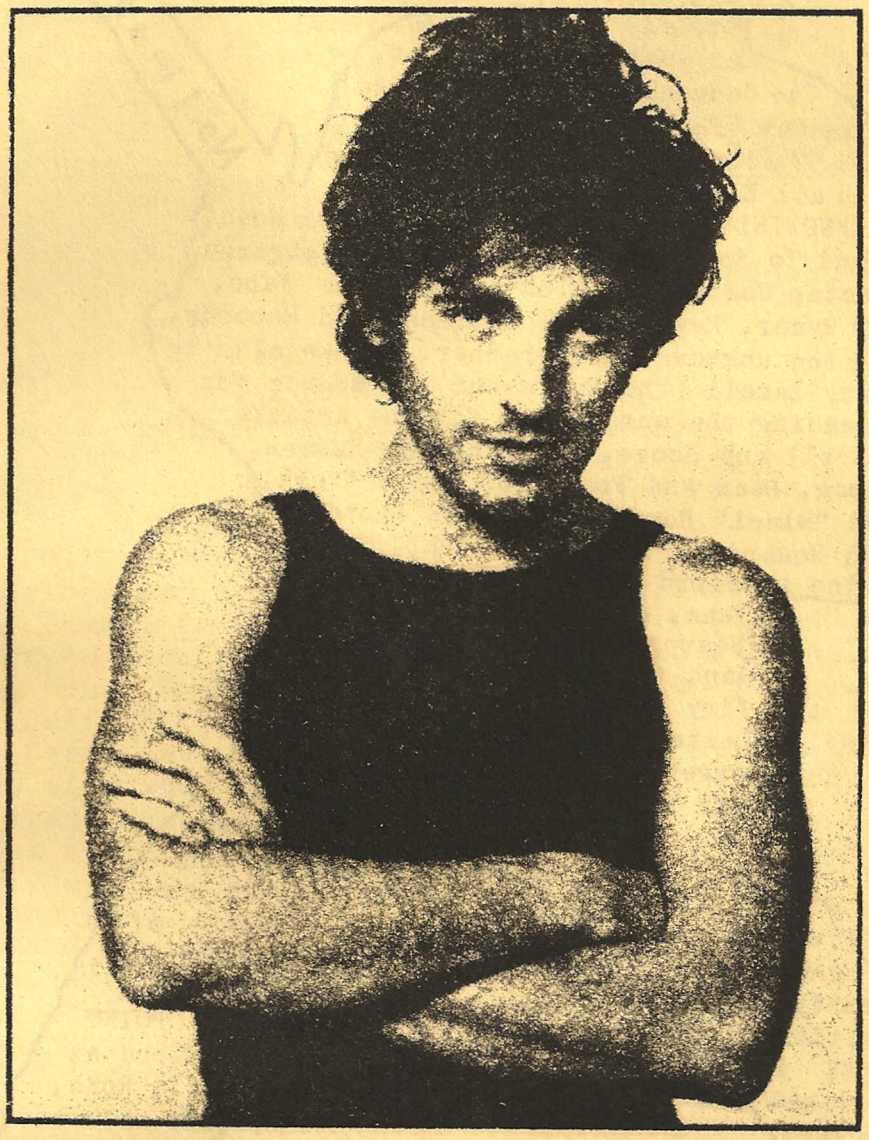
POINT BLANK

THE BOSS SOUND SEPTEMBER 1980



WANTED: A HERO

DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS MAN IS? → →

Greetings.. POINT BLANK is dedicated to Neil (you started it!), the Phantom Guards, Pete, Steve, Pete of Arabia, Irena, Anne, Mikeanwend, Dave, Howard, Ray, Charlie, Ed, all at Tombstone and Mufti the Crazy Cat, The General (for legal advice), The Rev (for spiritual guidance), No. 57 (for putting up with it-ta) and all E Streeters wherever they are. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS are due to: Thunder Road, Candy's Room, John, Doug Barrett & Abraxas, Instar Computers, Nick Logan & The Face, Ezy Ryder, New Musical Express, CBS Records, and the unknown photographer. Thanks also to Barry Lazell (The Professor) at Sounds for spreading the word, Doug for The Article (PartI) and booze, Mark for The Review, Droog, Dean and Frank for the letters, and "Miami" Ron, Dick Wallis Photos, and Howard for the pics. CREDITS go to the intrepid Point Blank Production Team, starring Jonathan the Beaver on letters, typing and phone calls, Blick on dry print, S. Reed and O. Lettera on typing, and not forgetting R. Xerox for copying. POINT BLANK is an unofficial and casual fanzine for Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band. It is non-profit-making, aiming only to promote the improvement of conditions for Springsteen fans, particularly the deprived British variety. POINT BLANK was produced at 57 Drake-field Road, London SW17, but will be moving camp to Streatham after Bruce reaches 31 (23 Sept). After then, the address will be: 11A Thirlmere Road, London SW16, UK. Finally, there's a cheapo pic disc of "Darkness" At King's X Bonaparte for only £35 (a snip in U.K!). Thanks a lot for the ride, Bruce. Cheers.

No.1 in a possible series... Dan 1980

POINT BLANK

Bruce Springsteen

Hi, this is POINT BLANK, a fanzine for Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. Thanks to Thunder Road and Candy's Room for the idea and to John, Doug, Ronnie, Chris, Mark, Neil, Jeff, Matthew, Droog, Mats, Mary, Dean, David, Howard, and everyone else who showed interest and offered advice, help, and encouragement (or otherwise!). This is for you, and you deserve much more than this.

POINT BLANK needs your black & white photos, artwork, articles and cuttings of Springsteenology. Contributions will be returned if required, and letters will be answered eventually if accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes.

If you've got messages for Bruce and the band, POINT BLANK will get them directed to the right people, but can't guarantee they'll reply. If you read this by 15 September you can send birthday messages for Bruce's 31st (23 September). Please enclose a 2p stamp towards p&p for mass sending.

Let me know what you think - PB is only as good as you make it. Like I said, it's for you. Thanks.

RENDEZVOUS

At the time of writing there's still no nukes of a definite release date for the new album, possibly a double, titled "River" according to Jon Landau. It's a long time overdue, not to mention the Boss's British/European tour, which will be the first since the 1975 "Born To Run" dates.

Produced and engineered by Jon Landau and Jimmy Iovine, album 5 has taken over 14 consecutive months of studio time at the New York Power Station, forcing other artists to switch studios to avoid Clashing with Bruce's 3-month bookings. The band have recorded at least 60 tracks, but it may take 5 or more arrangements before a Springsteen song is worked out. Orchestras and strings are being experimented with in the search for the classic rock'n'roll sound.

As the man said, "The release date is just one day - the record is forever." Hope it won't take forever, though. American bootleggers are already selling their version of "River", in addition to recorded gigs Bruce had in mind for an official live LP.

With Christmas in mind, CBS may push for the album to come out in time for the pre-festive rush, but Springsteen has been known to make drastic changes right up to the last minute. Stay tuned!

.....FINGERTIP FILE.....

Springsteen Guest Appearances on Record

This list is for the years I978-I980. Missing links? Over to you.

"Darkness On The Edge Of Town" wasn't enough of a gift to I978 for Bruce Springsteen. The man who'd been prevented from making records since I975 made at least three appearances as a guest artist on other people's records in that year.

FIRE

The rockabilly crooner Robert Gordon covered this Springsteen song unreleased by the Boss himself, although Bruce makes a rare piano appearance. The Private Stock single (PVT I45) has now been deleted, but the LP "Fresh Fish Special" (PVLP I038) from which it was taken is still available, and often cut-price too.

BLOODBROTHERS

Thunder Road and Peter Gambaccini credit the Dictators' 3rd Asylum LP (K530 83 6E-I47) with Bruce shouting "One-Two-Three-Four" on "Faster & Louder" the first track. Although the voice isn't obviously that of Springsteen, it's given credibility since the album was recorded at the Record Plant in New York when "Darkness" was recorded there.

STREET HASSLE

Lou Reed's first album for Arista (AB4 I69) features a familiar vocal during a quiet instrumental section of the three-part title track. Bass rumbles and fingers click as Bruce murmurs a few lines, the last being "Baby we were born to pay". Again, the album was recorded at New York's Record Plant studios.

I979 witnessed Springsteen's debut official live recording:

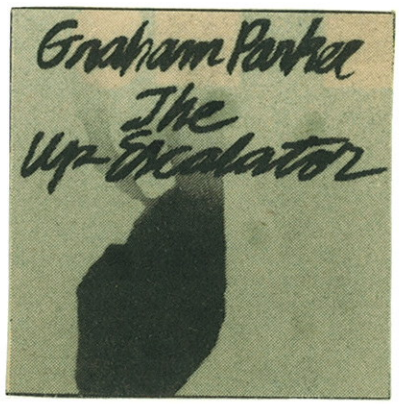
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NO NUKES

Although "Stay" is really Jackson Browne's song, on this version it's Bruce who invites him to join in on an E Street rendition of Maurice Williams' song.

★ ★ ★ ★

Springsteen's only guest appearance to date in I980 has been on



THE UP ESCALATOR

Graham Parker and The Rumour's debut Stiff album (Seez 23). Here he contributes backing vocals prominently during "Endless Night", and duets with GP on the choruses. Sharp-eared fans claim to have detected the Jersey Devil's presence on a second track. Any offers?

DISC DRIVE: GREETINGS FROM ASBURY PARK, NJ

Springsteen's first album didn't exactly take the world - beyond Asbury Park - by storm; but if it had been his only work, it would still have stood him above most of his contemporaries by quality. Like the second LP, a favourite of older fans and critics, this reveals more with frequent play.

"Greetings", a suitable debut title, is a curious collection, from the tacky picture postcard cover (which on original copies opens out to reveal the credits) down to the "stamp" photo - the first glimpse of a grinning and wild-haired confident young man. The closest comparison to it is Tim Buckley's "Greetings From L. A." with its opening sleeve.

Most people may remember the shorter version of "Blinded By The Light" that was a top five hit in both the U.K. and America for Manfred Mann's Earthband. It's evident why the "new Dylan" comparisons came about; given a role as a strumming songwriter-singer, Bruce over-stepped his image's limits with five minutes of rhyming lines - real excess, but the fact that a cover of it made the charts was proof of the early Springsteen writing skill.

"Growin' Up" follows, showing the contradictions involved in adolescence, and featuring Dave Sancious on piano. There's that line about discovering the key to the universe - in the engine of an old parked car. Many of Springsteen's songs feature an autobiographical element, though few as strongly as this.

Bruce is presented as the solo acoustic guitarist on "Mary Queen of Arkansas", passionately longing but intensely realistic at the same time, an inventive and powerful player and vocalist, a haunting harmonica at the back. The strumming shifts the mood to frantic excitement and ends calm and resigned, but hopeful.

Then it's uptempo again, and time for a boisterous ride with "Does This Bus Stop At 82nd Street", an urban stablemate with "It's Hard To Be A Saint In The City". It's brief and buoyant, slowing its reckless path suddenly for "Lost In The Flood".

This is the other aspect of "Blinded", still the jumble of jungleland portraits, but here combining vivid imagery with a sense of doubt and troubling city visions. Side one fades with floundering drums and the splash of cymbals.

"The Angel" opens side two, Bruce and Sancious painting a portrait of a biker. Acoustic and sparse, it's a strange and visionary piece, and "For You" follows urgently in its wake.

Like "Blinded By The Light", "For You" is a feast of lyrics, but more coherent - a classic. Two lovers about to be parted forever by death are treated with sympathy, making their otherwise melodramatic loss a poignant story.

Next it's lights down and party time as the band dance on through "Spirit In The Night", an audience participation song which is more than a singalong. A story of humour, emotion and unity, peopled with fantastic characters, it offers a moment of freedom.

The LP ends with "It's Hard To Be A Saint In The City"; and guitar and piano duel while the gang-leader boasts his claims. The drums thud away, the cowboy riding off into the sunset. The hero turns away confidently - ready or not, here I am - that's the message.

Sure, the album's incomplete, but as a collection of songs, each one telling a story, it's got a lot to say. Springsteen's sorting out his influences, and he learns fast. Right now he's giving all he's got.

- Jon Beaver

MARSH TIES THE BIND

BORN TO RUN - The Bruce Springsteen Story by DAVE MARSH (Doubleday & Co. 1979) Price: 3.95

A complete biography of our idol would usually be a phenomenally difficult task because of the sheer detail involved and that Bruce has given few revealing interviews, but Dave Marsh has managed to write a clear, forthright and intelligent book worthy of the man himself.

Marsh examines the important aspects of Bruce's career thoroughly - the development of his personality from its deep moral roots, the initial problems in forming his own musical identity, the romantic triumph of Born To Run, the subsequent hype and then mature renaissance. He achieves this by testing Bruce out in the whole rock'n'roll spectrum, comparing him with its component parts and concluding that Bruce Springsteen has both the talent and commitment to unite the best of rock's elements.

It is meticulously written with the four albums criticised constructively on a musical level, but I feel he tends to over-scrutinise the lyrics - a fault of many rock critics in Rolling Stone.

Part of Bruce's charisma is the psychological, independent effect of his songs and unfortunately the author over-analyses them. However his conclusions are accurate and interesting, especially the references to the influence of cinema, citing examples like Mean Streets and Two Lane Blacktop. Marsh also reveals Bruce's early problems with production and management, i.e. his determination to do it his own way against the commercial pressures of using session musicians - "I don't hire studio musicians. I don't want guys with big houses playing for me." - and playing big stadiums - "Money is a cheap way to get easy respect."

Marsh traces the emergence of Springsteen's character - from the ambitious street kid to the committed honest rock perfectionist, which is paralleled with the development of exciting epic-like live performances. The vital central issue of morality in terms of rock'n'roll lifestyle is examined to find a man determined to retain his personal independence and make the American Dream a reality, but on his own terms.

The author also outlines extensively the commercial problems, hype and the lawsuit. Time and time again, he is capable of conveying perfectly the inherent force within Bruce's soul.

This is an excellent portrayal written by a man who understands and shares the same attitudes and beliefs of his subject. The photography is quite superb and there is a full list of all Bruce's compositions - official and unreleased - plus other artists' material which he performs live. At just under four quid it's a must for all genuine Springsteen fans.

Mark Hollingsworth

THUNDER ROAD

THUNDER ROAD was first issued in March 1978, the brainchild of Ken Viola and Lou Cohan of Rolling Stone. Their first two issues were printed in black & white on limited financial resources (sounds familiar), and although publication dates are still erratic, the mag is more secure now after 2½ years and five editions.

Issue 1 is out of print, as is No. 4, but No. 5, the most recent, should still be available, and there may be a few copies of issues 2 & 3 left.

THUNDER ROAD No. 2 is twenty pages long, with nineteen b/w photos and 1 "visual perception" of the site of Thunder Road: "This is the land of peace, love, justice - and no mercy". The pages are all framed with a road motif: twin white lines on a black strip, winding on throughout the pages.

Credits include Jon Landau, Lynn Goldsmith, Dave Marsh, "Southside" Johnny Lyon, and Bruce and the band amongst a wealth of others. As they say, THUNDER ROAD is an unofficial magazine, but done with a lot of cooperation. The editorial is warm and honest, giving a sense of a spirit as communal as the Asbury park pool of musicians.

First up is a four-page article entitled "Springsteen Comes Of Age" by Kit Rachlis of the Boston Phoenix. Revolving around the 1978 tour and the "Darkness" album, he uses monologues spoken by Bruce when introducing songs at some of the shows to discuss the maturity reached by Springsteen between 1975 and 1978.

"Open Heart, Open Letter" is a few extracts from Ken Viola's diary, made into a letter/poem.

In "Unreleased Springsteen", Steve Pond reviews "American Tune", an out-take from "Greetings From Asbury Park". Two welcome treats here are the second album's lyrics and the Asbury Jukes' US releases.

The THUNDER ROAD interview here is Southside Johnny with Ken Viola at the time "Hearts Of Stone" was issued. It's totally unedited.

The back page sums up the news items; this follows the letters pages, featuring poems, a Bruce look-alike pic, and a letter that praises TR itself for layout, photos and writing, and restraint from hero-worship. As friends of the band, TR was the first, and is the best authority on Springsteen.

Dan French

See FACTORY for details of how to get THUNDER ROAD.

SPIRITS IN THE WRITE

Hello Dan,

I have only been turned on to Bruce Springsteen & the E Street gang for about a year or so but it seems to me for ever because the songs he sings are the ones that I've been trying to write.

But "Streets Of Fire", "Darkness On The Edge Of Town", the list would be long. Like when on my cycle to work I think of "Factory", and if a pretty girl says good morning, "Rosalita" starts playing in my head, and if the day is long, as they often are, "Promised Land". When at home we play his and the gang's albums, it's always both sides and sometimes two albums of theirs without a break just to get into it you see.

- Droog, Southampton

★

Dear Dan,

...I hope your magazine is a great success. I'm a bit of a one man band as far as Bruce goes in my area. Whenever I mention Bruce Springsteen I often get the remark "Bruce who?" but I think I'm getting through to a few people...

- Dean, Morpeth, Northumberland

★

Greetings to all you Springsteen fans from across the waves!! Here in America we're patiently awaiting the new album from the Boss!! Very reliable sources here in the States have stated that Bruce has at least written well over seventy-five tunes since the Born To Run album!! Now two and a half years is a long wait between albums but it will be well worth the wait! Some of the new songs that Springsteen has composed are: The Promise, Linda Let Me Be The One, The River (which is the proposed title of his upcoming album), Sherry Darlin', Rendezvous, Don't Look Back, I Want To Be With You, Outside Looking In, Frankie, The Ties That Bind, and Roulette. This last song was written in 1979 and with the Three Mile Island disaster in mind. Bruce recorded this song in the studio in 1979.

One of the things that has always puzzled me about Bruce has been that he hasn't toured that extensively outside the U.S.A. The Boss has always managed to take his time no matter what the record company says, but I hope he tours Europe or maybe even Japan to see if he gives "outside" audiences a different feeling! Well, until next time, Springsteen die-hards, I wish you good health! (You'll need it for the upcoming tour). I welcome all true blue Bruce Springsteen fanatics to correspond with me at Box 304, Eagleville, PA 19408, U.S.A.

- Frank J Kleinschmidt, USA

Letters, photos, artwork, articles, cuttings, stamps and revolutionary bids will be gratefully received, as will stamped addressed envelopes for replies.

POINT BLANK, 57 Drakefield Road, London SW17.

FACTORY

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2 Designs:
"Springsteen - He's The One"
"Born To Run" (LP cover style)

£3.50 T-Shirts, £5.95 Sweatshirts (S/M/L size)
T-I-T-S T-Shirts, 12 Blenheim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne

IMAGINE magazine (back issues featured Springsteen/Jukes) and TROUSER PRESS: 90p each sample copy - Ezy Ryder, 14 Forrest Road, Edinburgh, EH1 2QN. Also Trouser Press COLLECTORS MAGAZINE 60p, GOLDMINE COLLECTORS MAGAZINE (3 issues) 75p each + 41p p+p

POINT BLANK can't accept liability for complaints against ads.

MEETING ACROSS THE RIVER

All classified ads must be pre-paid. POINT BLANK will not accept any responsibility for errors or liability for dissatisfaction with any transactions resulting from advertising or responding to small ads. Be warned!

Headings include: Personal, For Sale, Wanted, Musicians, Instruments, Services, Recording, Equipment, Transport/Travel, Printing, Traders' Announcements, Publications, Special Notices, Miscellaneous, etc.

Classified advertising rates are a minimum of 25p for the first 15 words, which must include name and address. 1p per word thereafter. For any capital words after the first two, add 1p per word. Postal Orders and cheques should be made payable to D. French.

EXAMPLE: WANTED

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN material wanted: photos, artwork, articles, cuttings etc. Collectors' items for trade. POINT BLANK, 57 Drakefield Road, London SW17.

The above ad would cost 32p (25p for the minimum first 15 words, 5p for the next five, plus 2p for the two extra capital words).

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BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN - THE RETURN OF ROCK'N'ROLL

Doug Barrett recounts the story so far.

Part I: Sparks Fly On E Street

More than almost any modern performer, Bruce Springsteen typifies the spirit of Rock'n'Roll. He shot to superstardom and then almost oblivion between '75 - '76, having to carry on his shoulders one of the biggest hypes in the history of rock.

Springsteen was born on 23 September I949 in New Jersey. His parents, devout Catholics, gave him a strict religious upbringing. By his own admission, he didn't start living until he was I3 and discovered the guitar and rock and roll. He saw this as his road to freedom, as rock was the only thing he related to and the only thing he felt spoke the truth.

By I965 Bruce was playing guitar in New York and progressing slowly until in I972 he met Mike Appel, who took him to Columbia Records' John Hammond, the man who first signed Bob Dylan.

In January I973 Springsteen's first album, "Greetings From Asbury Park, N.J." was released. His musicians included Clarence Clemons (saxophone) and Gary Tallent (bass), who were to be the nucleus of the E Street Band. The LP received immediate critical attention but did little sales-wise, barely reaching the U.S. Top I00. Despite the promotion of Bruce as "the new Dylan", it didn't seem to click.

Soon after "Asbury Park" came out, the newly-formed E Street Band, with "Miami" Steve Van Zandt on guitar, "Phantom" Danny Federici on organ, and featuring Vini "Mad Dog" Lopez on drums and David Sancious on piano, in addition to Clarence and Gary, worked the clubs and bars of the eastern seaboard with Bruce, never venturing far from their New Jersey base. Taking the view that no-one would turn up for the shows, anyone who did was a bonus, and having paid their money, they deserved the best that Bruce and the band could offer. He was unaware, however, of the raw deal of his contract with Mike Appel's Laurel Canyon company.

Springsteen took the band to New York to record a second album, "The Wild, The Innocent & The E Street Shuffle", released in November I973. As with the first LP, again produced by Mike Appel and Jim Cretecos, the new set drew critical acclaim. "The E Street Shuffle" was a stage favourite, opening with a long rap about how the Big Man joined the band on a cold New Jersey night.

The album was less fast, more urban than the first, again lacking in production, but the lyrics are vivid images of teenage American life. The feel displayed here remains Springsteen's biggest hurdle in Britain because it's simply not understood.

Bruce and the band, now with "Mighty" Max Weinberg and "Professor" Roy Bittan replacing Lopez and Dave Sancious, took the album on tour, developing the show, highlighting the drama in the long narrative songs. On the road they were making headway, gaining a small loyal following, but the LP failed to reach the American Top I00. A big break was obviously needed. Springsteen remained almost unheard of in Britain.

The break eventually came, almost wiping Bruce off the rock map as it did so. Jon Landau, New York editor of Rolling Stone, saw a show and was spellbound. Springsteen found himself on the front cover of the paper; and in a well-intentioned article, a quote of Landau's became a noose around the Jersey Devil's neck when it was used by Columbia as the base of a massive promotional campaign. It read: "I have seen the future of Rock and Roll and its name is Bruce Springsteen".

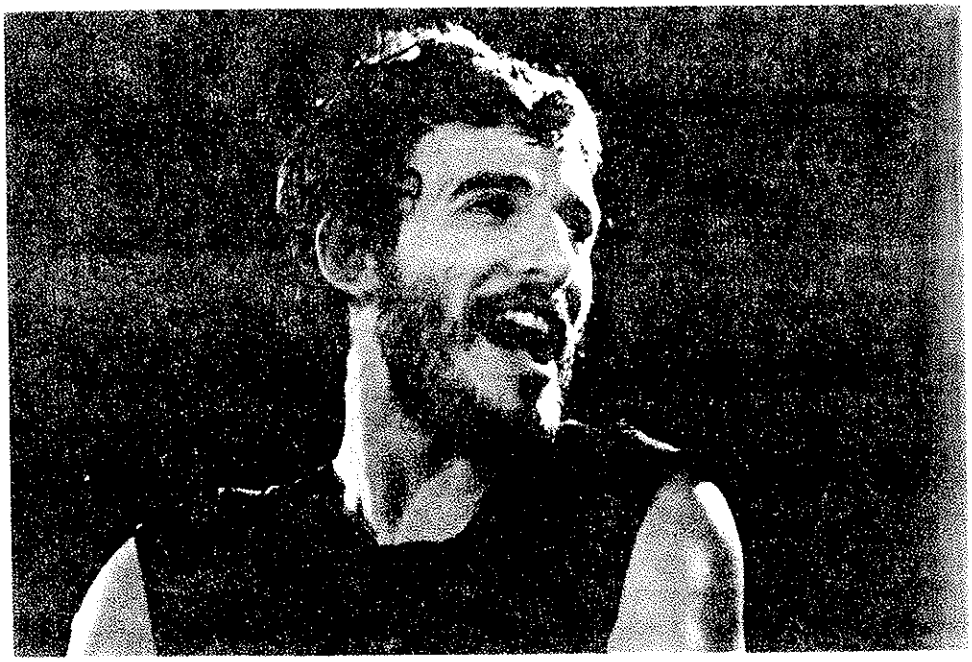
BACKSTREETS

Mixed rumours abound about the new album, and CBS seem as much in the dark about the facts as anyone. As a representative put it, "The only rumour I haven't heard is that he's recording a single without a B-side".

In addition to the possibility of a double album in the light of the number of tracks Bruce is known to have recorded, the Boss is also involved in the production of some live material, and again there's the chance of more than a single set. Indeed, to do a representation of a live Springsteen show justice would require at least a double; although a truly realistic showcase warrants six or more sides, a record company may hesitate to agree to such a proposal from an artist (however prolific he may be as a writer) with only four studio works to his credit in about twice as many years.

Bruce's only official live recordings to date are two tracks, neither of them his own compositions, on the triple "No Nukes" LP, culled from Bruce's only 1979 appearance - at the anti-nuclear MUSE concerts in New York. Together with contributions from Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers, Ry Cooder, and Jackson Browne (who duets with Bruce on "Stay"), Springsteen's efforts are definitely the highlight of the records.

In particular there's the traditional encore, the famous "Detroit Medley" of "Devil With The Blue Dress On/Good Golly Miss Molly/Jenny Take A Ride", still done by Mitch Ryder and The Detroit Wheels (once tipped as the support band for Bruce's expected European tour) on their last British visit earlier this year.

POINT BLANK's man in the States reports there's a film of the MUSE gigs, currently on release in New York, featuring a ten-minute spot of Bruce performing. Those who saw The Old Grey Whistle Test edition with Springsteen doing "Rosalita" will have an idea of The Boss's big screen appearance.

Any full-length live release will have the challenging task of encapsulating not only the breadth of Springsteen's material and the length of his shows, but also the sheer dramatic quality and excitement of his gigs. Ironically, the bootleggers have the edge over the authorised producers, because they can capture the exhilarating atmosphere, and - perhaps more importantly - they've had more practice.